Capacity Building Needs Assessment for Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas in Cambodia

Summary of Final Report

The Learning Institute and
RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests
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THE LEARNING INSTITUTE
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CONTENTS

List of Acronyms

AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional Para el Desarrollo (Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Awareness, Public Relations & Advocacy
CBNA	Capacity Building Needs Assessment
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBPF	Community Based Production Forestry
CC	Commune Council
CF	Community Forestry
CFMC	Community Forestry Management Committee
CFO	Community Forestry Office
CFP	Community Forestry Partnership
CFWG	Community Forestry Working Group
CLUP	Commune Land Use Planning
CMC	Community Management Committee
CPA	Community Protected Areas
CPAMC	Community Protected Area Management Committee
CPF	Community Protected Forest
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DEV	Sustainable Development and Conflict Management
EU	European Union
FA	Forestry Administration
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FGD	Focus group discussion
FRA	Forest Resource Assessment
GDANCP	General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MoE	Ministry of Environment
NCFPCC	National Community Forestry Program Coordination Committee
NFP	National Forestry Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
NTFP-EP	Non-timber Forest Product Exchange Program
Oxfam GB	Oxfam Great Britain
PA	Protected Area
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PNSA	Prek Leap National School of Agriculture
PPWS	Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary
PRO	Program Development and Project Management
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center (Centre for People and Forests)
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RUA	Royal University of Agriculture

RUPP	Royal University of Phnom Penh
SCW	Save Cambodia's Wildlife
SFM	Sustainable Community Forest Management
SFMRLE	Sustainable Forest Management and Rural Livelihood Enhancement
SOC	Socio-economic and Culture Assessment
TRA	Individual Capacity Development and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

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RECOFTC is the only international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity building for community forestry and devolved forest management in Asia - Pacific. Beginning as a knowledge hub in 1987, RECOFTC has actively supported the development of community forestry institutions, policies and programs in the region.

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CBNA Cambodia Report Summary

1. Background

This report summarizes the results of an independent capacity building needs assessment (CBNA) for the development of community forestry (CF) and community protected areas (CPA) in Cambodia. The CBNA is an initiative of RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests supported by the Learning Institute and key stakeholders who contribute to the National Forest Program and CPA management strategy development in Cambodia. It was conducted between June 2010 and March 2011 to assess the status of CF and CPA practices, and identify capacity building needs at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels to further enhance CF and CPA.

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify priorities for development of CF and CPA in Cambodia;
2. To identify the key stakeholders of Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas;
3. To assess the capacity building needs of key stakeholders; and
4. To provide recommendations for capacity building programs for Community Forestry and Community Protected Area development.

To achieve these objectives, a combination of participatory and iterative methods were used, including focus group discussions (FGD), field visits, interviews, desk review and intensive consultation with key CF/CPA stakeholders in Cambodia.

Following RECOFTC's guidelines, the assessment underwent six main steps:

1. Compiling a country profile through the identification of key challenges, issues and priorities for CF and CPA development in Cambodia;
2. Stakeholder Analysis of both actual and potential stakeholders, and identification of key stakeholders;
3. Development of Competence Profiles of skills required by key roles;
4. Individual Assessment of capacity building needs of persons performing selected key roles in stakeholder groups and organizations against competence standards;
5. Organizational Assessment of the capacity of stakeholder groups and organizations to support new competences; and
6. CBNA reporting results to stakeholders

The consultants used RECOFTC's Capacity Building Guidelines (RECOFTC, 2010) to assess gaps between current and desired knowledge and skills at individual and organizational levels

using nine competence standards and six categories respectively. For the individual assessment, the nine competence standards used were:
1. Community forestry policy and planning (CFP)
2. Sustainable community forest management (SFM)
3. Forest resources assessment (FRA)
4. Participatory action research (PAR)
5. Socio-economic and cultural assessment (SOC)
6. Sustainable development and conflict management (DEV)
7. Awareness, public relations & advocacy (APR)
8. Individual capacity development and training (TRA)
9. Program development and project management (PRO).

These competence standards were further adapted to the level of intervention at which the selected key roles perform. Generally, these are:
1. On the ground forest management level
2. Local Forest Management unit level
3. Other sub-national level
4. National level
5. Regional and international levels

For the organizational assessment, the six categories and indicators used were:
1. Program Planning
2. Governance Mechanisms
3. Service Delivery
4. Human Resource Management
5. Budget and Financial Management
6. Stakeholder Communications

These nine competence standards and six categories/indicators became the bases for assessing individual and organizational capacities in CF and CPA. The results of these assessments are discussed further in the next sections.

2. Summary of Cambodia's CBNA Results

2.1 Country Level

2.1.1 Country Background
Cambodia's forests, currently covering 10.8 million hectares of total land area, contain diverse ecosystems, are of great importance for cultural heritage, and have high potential to contribute to the development of the economy (RGC, 2009). The rural poor, in particular, are highly dependent on forest resources in a great variety of ways. In fact, nearly half of rural indigent households generate at least one quarter of their incomes from natural resources (World Bank, 2006). Furthermore, indigenous communities, one of the most vulnerable populations in Cambodia, associate forests with their cultural and spiritual identity, and forest products comprise a large portion of their economy..

However, forest resources in Cambodia have increasingly come under pressure during the last four decades due to population growth, rising unemployment, development, internal migration, and weak law enforcement. Since 1973, more than 2.4 million hectares of forested lands have been logged (Ma Sok, 2001). In 1997, the International Monetary Fund stated that "the depletion of the country's most valuable resource remains the single most critical issue in Cambodia" (Le Billon, 2000). Given the success of community based natural resource management and protection initiatives in other countries, community forestry has been regarded as one of the most effective methods of achieving decentralized sustainable forest management in Cambodia.

2.1.2 Challenges and Key Issues
Despite the growing support from government institutions and non-government organizations, the concept of community based forest management in Cambodia is still young, and currently faces significant challenges. Key issues in Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas were identified through desk review and further discussed during the first focus group discussion (FGD) conducted on August 19, 2010 with government, non-government, donors, and academic institutions. Identifying challenges and key issues helps determine development priorities for community forestry (CF) and community protected areas (CPA). These challenges and issues are presented in the next section.

2.1.2.1 Community Forestry
- ***Tenure issues***: The lack of secure tenure is a major cause of conflict. Other contentious issues include restriction of access, exclusion, degradation of resources, overlapping land claims from adjacent villages and conflicting land uses, i.e. economic land concessions, forest concessions and others.
- ***Poor condition of forests***: Two-thirds of all Community Forestry initiatives have been established in areas of heavily degraded forests, or where there are no forests at all. In fact, there are no examples of community forestry being established in undisturbed forests. Seedlings provided to communities will not reach maturity for 25-30 years, so there are few immediate benefits for local communities (Thyldel Lopez, 2005).
- ***Capacity levels***: The capacity level of those responsible for managing and implementing Community Forestry is identified as a key issue. Navigating through a complex legal framework, such as the CF *Prakas* and the Forestry Law, is an unfamiliar process for most Community Forestry Management Committee (CFMC) members. The CFMCs also require

capacity building to increase their accountability to other stakeholders, especially to members of their own CF.

- *Slow process of establishment*: The lengthy CF registration and approval process remains a significant hurdle. A review of Community Fisheries and Community Forestry (2010) regulations estimated that at a minimum, completion of all the eleven steps required, takes between 305 and 390 days, or even longer, if revisions are needed.
- *High cost of establishment*: The review also estimated that establishing Community Forestry costs an average of US$ 55,000 (Blomley et al., 2010). This is out of reach for most communities in Cambodia without funding from donors. It is crucial to secure long-term funding to sustain the forest, develop cost effective practices and build the capacity of local institutions.
- *Illegal activities and overuse of forest resources*: Illegal harvesting of timber and NTFPs and clearing of forests for agricultural use are still quite common. Illegal activities degrade forest resources and discourage others from practicing sustainable forest use. The contribution of CF to livelihoods will need to be addressed to combat this problem.

2.1.2.2 Community Protected Areas

- *Lack of CPA Guidelines*: Without the enactment of the CPA *Prakas,* there are no recognized formal procedures for establishing and managing CPAs. The lack of guidelines also fails to legally protect the CPA against economic land concessions.
- *Low capacity*: Given the government's proclamation that 10% to 30% of protected areas are to be co-managed by communities, facilitators, protected area managers, and Community Protected Area Management Committee members (CPAMCs) will need new skills and capacities. According to San (2006), facilitators who support communities to establish CPAs are still unclear about their roles and that of the communities, and lack practical experience. Many CPAMCs lack the capacity to successfully coordinate, implement and manage CPA activities. In conjunction with decentralized forest management, local communities need capacity building and opportunities for alternate livelihoods (International Center for Environmental Management-ICEM, 2003).
- *Limited resources to manage protected areas*: In 2008, protected areas represented just 0.18% of government expenditure (ICEM, 2003). This is very low, considering Cambodia has one of the largest protected area systems in the world. The lack of financial resources has contributed to the inability of management personnel to patrol protected area forests, allowing illegal logging activities to persist (ICEM, 2003).
- *Boundary demarcation*: The 23 existing protected areas were demarcated according to forest reserves established in the 1950s and limited information from the early 1990s. These boundaries were established without complete information on species habitats, ecosystems and habitat corridors. A review of current PA boundaries is needed to assess if changes are necessary to improve coverage of habitats and address conflicts between communities and government sectors (ICEM, 2003).

2.1.3 Priorities for Development

One of the specific objectives of this undertaking is to identify priorities for development in community forestry and community protected areas at the country level. This was achieved through desk review and later validated through the first FGD mentioned earlier. With the challenges and issues known, the consultants facilitated the identification of priorities for development.

2.1.3.1 Community Forestry

- **Approval of CF sites**: A major priority is to push for further approval and agreements between communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to establish CF sites. New sites need to be identified to reach the National Forestry Program's goal of putting two million hectares of forests under decentralized forest management by forest dependent communities. It is recommended that the three other alternative modalities of CF under the National Forest Program – Community Based Production Forestry (CPF), Community Conservation Forestry (CCF) and Partnership Forestry (PF) – be used to augment the existing modality of community forestry.

- **Incorporation of Community Forestry Management into Commune Development Plans**: In the future, CF management plans will be developed for multiple purposes, allowing greater integration of community forestry into the local planning and development process. This would increase support for community forestry activities and contribute to livelihoods improvement.

- **Boundary demarcation**: The boundaries of the Permanent Forest Estate need to be made clearer. At present, it is not clear how conversion forests will be managed and used. Boundaries between Production Forests and Conversion Forests remain confusing for communities.

- **Capacity building**: Capacity building for government agencies, community groups and CF members is a priority. Local institutions, such as the Community Forestry Management Committees, require training on report writing, management, and monitoring and evaluation techniques, as well as governance mechanisms that promote transparency and accountability.

- **Coordination:** It is necessary to improve networking and coordination among key stakeholders, and to develop and strengthen associations to exchange and promote learning.

2.1.3.2 Community Protected Areas

- **Approval of CPA Prakas**: It is a priority to support and speed up the approval of CPA *Prakas*. The enactment of these guidelines will help the establishment and management of CPAs, and formalize the government's recognition of community protected areas.

- **Boundary demarcation**: Boundaries, in particular, demarcations between community zones and the three other zones need to be clear. An underlying cause of past mismanagement and overuse of forest resources has been the lack of clear user rights and obligations (ICEM, 2003). Communities should participate in the demarcation process to ensure that traditional uses and customs are safeguarded.

- **Livelihoods improvement**: The designation of rural poor communities as stewards of resources in and near protected areas has been inadequate to lift communities above the poverty line. A combination of co-management by communities and alternative livelihoods is needed to achieve substantial poverty reduction. Options for alternative livelihood must be provided to improve living standards and to ensure that illegal resource use is minimized.

- *Capacity building*: Capacity building at all levels is a priority for the development of CPA management. This will help CPAMCs and commune councils to better integrate protected areas into commune development plans and reinforce the role of commune councils in various aspects of protected area management. Managers of Protected Areas who are required to fulfill broader roles require capacity building on technical aspects of PA management, conflict management, and livelihood diversification.

2.2 Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders for Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas were identified through brainstorming during the first focus group discussion (FGD) and the subsequent discussions that followed between RECOFTC Cambodia and the Learning Institute consultancy team. The results were later verified by participants during the second and third FGDs. These key stakeholders included national, sub-national and local governments, international and local NGOs, networks and working groups, academic institutions, and local communities.
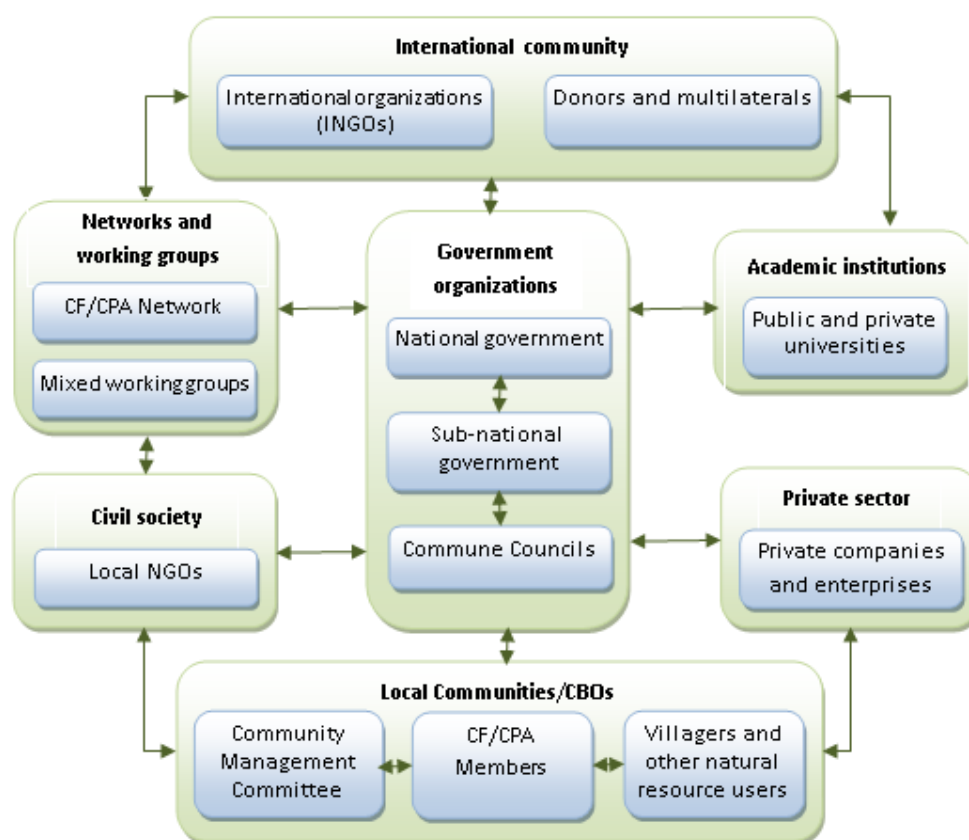
Using the Framework for Stakeholder Analysis above, the figure shows how various key stakeholders interact with one another. The figure also reflects the horizontal and vertical relationships among the key stakeholders. Although there are seven major stakeholder groups identified, the framework illustrates that two of these stakeholders are at the core: government

organizations and local communities/community-based organizations. The rest are reflected as key actors that could significantly affect the interests of the core stakeholders.

A summary of the identified key stakeholders for community forestry and community protected areas is listed on the table below. Here, we considered key stakeholders as those who can either significantly influence the outcomes or be directly affected by CF and CPA development activities. The table shows 17 and 16 stakeholders were identified for community forestry and community protected areas, respectively, under seven stakeholder groups.

A total of eight stakeholders were identified for the government group, four for the local NGOs, six for international community, two for academic institutions, two for network and working groups and one for local communities.

The table below also shows that only the government stakeholder group has a distinct delineation of its jurisdiction for 2 environmental matters that are closely intertwined with one another: community forestry and community protected areas. With this very distinct delineation, lack of coordination between various government institutions and their line agencies could contribute to the slowdown of the development of CF and CPAs in Cambodia.

Key stakeholders	Community Forestry	Community Protected Area
Government		
MAFF/FA/CFO	X	
Forestry and Wildlife Training Center	X	
FA Cantonments	X	
FA Divisions and Triages	X	
MoE/GDANCP		X
Provincial Departments of Environment		X
PA Authorities		X
Commune Councils	X	X
Local NGOs		
Mlup Baitong	X	X
Learning Institute	X	X
SCW		X
Other local NGOs	X	X
International Community		
RECOFTC Cambodia	X	
WCS	X	X
WWF	X	X
Pact	X	X
Oxfam GB	X	
FFI		X
Academic Institutions		
RUA	X	X
RUPP		X
Networks and working groups		
NCFP CC	X	
CNWG	X	X
Local communities/CBOs		
CF/CPA Management committees	X	X

2.2.1 Key Capacity Building Needs

With the identification of key stakeholders, the assessment of their capacity building needs followed. These needs were categorized by competence and by role/function.

2.2.1.1 Individual

Using the procedure for individual capacity assessments, capacity gaps were identified, for each skill in different competence categories and levels. A total of 74 people were interviewed face-to-face, from October to November 2010. This yielded 43 positions assessed from 13 CF organizations and 11 CPA organizations. These 43 positions fall into five categories:

1. Local Field Implementers
2. Sub-National Facilitators
3. Sub-National Coordinators
4. National Coordinators and National Facilitators
5. Managers/Strategists

The extensive data collected has been used to propose priority capacity-building needs for each competence. A summary of the results are shown below.

2.2.1.1.1 By Competence

The top competences based on the results are sustainable community forest management, forest resources assessment, and sustainable development and conflict management. Column three of the table below shows the top answers under each of the nine competence standards. Column two shows the number of frequencies for each competency. The 74 respondents were allowed to have multiple responses under each competence category, hence the total in some cases could be more than 74. More details of this table are available in the full report.

Competence	Count	Top answers
Sustainable community forest management	87	identifying sustainable livelihoods, ecological surveying, monitoring, evaluation
Forest resources assessment	78	forest inventory, data analysis, environmental impact assessment
Sustainable development and conflict management	76	marketing and enterprise initiatives, conflict management, natural resource management, technical skills
Socio-economic and cultural assessment	43	cultural awareness, methodologies
Participatory action research	43	data analysis, research skills, environmental monitoring programs
Community forestry/CPA policy and planning	39	interpret relevant legislation, CF/CPA planning
Program development and project management	28	operational plan development, monitoring results, proposal development, capacity building analysis, implementation of workplans, plans for in-country activities
Awareness, public relations & advocacy	18	stakeholder engagement, raising awareness, publication development
Individual capacity development and training	14	capacity building analysis, training program development and evaluation

2.2.1.1.2 By Function

The function with the most number of identified capacity building needs is the sub-national coordinator, with 137, followed by the sub-national facilitator with 99. The function with the least number of identified capacity building needs is the national facilitator with 23. The top answers under each of the functions are displayed in column three of the table below. Column 2 shows the frequencies of the multiple responses from the respondents in five position levels. It must be noted that each respondent could choose as many as 204 answers depending on the individual capacity assessment tool used. The more detailed the tool is, the higher the chance to get more responses. More details of this table are available in the full report.

Function	Count	Top answers
Sub-national coordinator	137	environmental impact assessment, monitoring, identifying sustainable livelihoods, ecological surveying, data analysis, research skills, methodologies, natural resource management, capacity building analysis
Sub-national facilitator	99	identifying sustainable livelihoods, evaluation, forest inventory, forest carbon, timber stock, monitoring
National coordinator	76	interpret relevant legislations, market analysis
Local field implementer	51	data analysis, cultural awareness, surveying
Manager strategists	40	environment monitoring programs, scientific analysis
National facilitator	23	confilct management

2.2.2 Organizational

Having identified capacity building requirements for key functions, a stakeholder organization may wish to evaluate the capacity of the organization's systems and procedures to support the strengthened capacity of staff to engage in activities associated with community forestry and community protected areas.

Organizational capacity assessments were used to identify the key stakeholder organization development requirements for categories related to effective internal governance, systems and procedures to support community forestry and community protected area programs. The succeeding tables below illustrate key stakeholder groups' capacity building needs in community forestry and community protected areas. Details of these summary tables can be found in the full report.

2.2.2.1 Community Forestry

Organization	Categories					
	Program Planning	Governance Mechanisms	Service Delivery	Human Resource Management	Budget and Financial Management	Stakeholder Communication
Government			x	x	x	
International NGOs	x			x		x
Local NGOs				x	x	x
Networks and Working Groups	x			x	x	
CFMCs	x	x	x	x		x
Commune Councils	x	x	x	x	x	x

The table above shows human resource management as a cross-cutting capacity building need in community forestry, while commune councils indicate the need to improve on all six categories for organizational capacity development.

2.2.2.2 Community Protected Areas

Organization	Categories					
	Program Planning	Governance Mechanisms	Service Delivery	Human Resource Management	Budget and Financial Management	Stakeholder Communication
Government	x		x	x	x	x
International NGOs	x			x		x
Local NGOs				x	x	x
CPAMCs	x		x	x	x	x
Commune Councils	x			x	x	x

The table above shows human resource management and stakeholder communication categories as cross-cutting capacity building needs in community protected areas, while government and CPAMCs indicate the need to improve in five of the six categories for organizational capacity development.

Both tables indicate human resource development as a key capacity building need in community forestry and community protected areas.

3. Major Findings

Significant individual, organizational and institutional capacity building needs exist for the development of Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas in Cambodia. This CBNA identified more than 150 individual capacity needs at all levels. Organizational capacity needs were also identified from all stakeholders. It would be impossible for a single organization to respond to all of these needs, so it is important to prioritize training strategies among the several organizations that can provide specific capacity building services. Capacity must be strengthened among all stakeholders and at all levels to achieve the necessary human resource base and technical capacity to reach the country's target of establishing community forests covering 2 million hectares.

In general, capacity levels in community forestry are still low, particularly among managers and implementers, with most stakeholders still in the process of fully grasping the complex legal framework involving CF *Prakas* and the Forestry Law. Community forestry development and capacity building have so far focused on mainstreaming, formalizing, and legalizing the informally established CFs, with positive results in recent years. Capacity building must now focus on the development of forest management plans to include how community forests can deliver the expected benefits. Guidelines on forest management planning are now under development, with the next step in furthering community forestry to be building capacity for implementing these new guidelines. Capacity levels are also low among facilitators who support communities to establish CPAs, as facilitators remain unclear about their roles and that of the communities in CPA establishment and lack practical experience.

Based on literature review and the results of the first focus group discussion, a number of institutional challenges and key issues in CF and CPA were identified. These include the slow process for establishing CFs and CPAs; high costs in legalization procedures; presence of conflicts relating to land tenure; degraded forests designated for community forestry; illegal activities and exploitation of forest resources; inadequate capacity levels of those managing the forests; limited resources to manage community protected areas; unclear boundary demarcation; and lack of CPA guidelines.

At the organizational level, capacity building needs in CF appear to concentrate more on human resource development. Results showed that those organizations in greatest need of capacity building are the commune councils and CF management committees. In CPA, results indicate that efforts must focus on two areas: human resource development and stakeholder communication. Results also showed that more focus should be given to government and CPA management committee capacity building needs.

At the individual level, using the competence standard assessment results, results indicate that efforts must focus on three competence categories: sustainable community forest management, forest resources assessment, and sustainable development and conflict management. Assessment results also indicate that the sub-national coordinator level position occupies a pivotal role in CF and CPA management and implementation, as manifested by the number of identified capacity building needs for that position and by the rigidness of the tools used to gauge its needs.

4. Recommendations

- Prioritize and coordinate training strategies: These efforts should be coordinated to avoid overlaps and to improve efficiency.

- Institutional issues and priorities: The priorities for CF and CPA development include: approval of CF sites, the incorporation of the management plan into the local development plan, clear boundary demarcation, capacity building, approval of CPA *Prakas*, livelihood improvements, and enterprise development.

- Priority individual capacity building needs. At a strategic level, it is recommended that capacity-building strategies be developed according to the priorities highlighted in this report. Capacity building activities should focus on priority training needs that are fundamental to the effective implementation of CF and CPAs at various individual levels. The data point to the immediate undertaking of the establishment of CF and CPA plans; identifying sustainable livelihoods; marketing and enterprise development; natural resource management; ecological surveying; environmental impact assessment; methodologies for socio-economic and cultural assessments; research skills; data analysis; monitoring; evaluation; and operation plan development.

- Prioritize organizational capacity building at the local level followed by technical government agencies. Limited resources would be most wisely used to support the development of local organizations such as CFMC, CPAMCs, Commune Councils, and government agencies (such as the FA and GDANCP) that provide technical support and services. For these priority organizations, key categories of organizational capacity building include: program planning, governance mechanisms, service delivery, human resource management, budget and financial management and stakeholder communication.

- Adapt the results of the CBNA into a capacity building strategy that contributes to the Community Forestry Program (CFP)/National Forest Program (NFP) and the Protected Areas Strategic Plan for Community Protected Area Development. As a first step, it is recommended to present the results of the CBNA at the meeting of the National Community Forestry Program Coordination Committee (NCFPCC) and/or the Technical Working Group for Forestry and Environment (TWG F&E). Workshops at the provincial level covering different geographical areas should also be organized to explain the process and results of the CBNA so that communities and local organizations can build their plans and strategies based on the findings.

- Develop communication products and tailored capacity building services. The next steps of a capacity building strategy would be to develop communication products and tailored capacity building services based on the findings of this CBNA. In particular, the competence standards should be reviewed, updated and translated into the Khmer language for wider reach.

- More gender considerations need to be included into the CBNA process and results. Gender disaggregation tools/methods and gender analysis of results need to be incorporated into future CBNA assessments so that capacity building services are appropriate and well-suited to both female and male stakeholders.

- Revisit and institutionalize the CBNA process. This process should be revisited during the next four or five years. It would also be useful to try to institutionalize this capacity needs assessment exercise so that in the future, stakeholders are able to assess their capacity gaps themselves.